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'VERY EDUCATIONAL'

New York Magazine Spotlights Bonn

The Bonn government has put into American distribution a half-hour propaganda film entitled "A People and Its State" that divulges more, it is safe to say, than its producers intended. Purporting to be a history of postwar Germany until about 1959, the film begins with a plea for reunification. Now reunification, in anyone's language except, apparently, the German's, simply means the reuniting of East and West Germany.

In this instance a map accompanies the plea, and what is shown is not Germany as it is divided today, but the Germany with which Hitler started World War II in 1939 – including East Prussia, Pomerania and other eastern territories that are no longer under the sovereignty of Germany, East or West.

This is not "reunification"; it is irredentism of precisely the kind that the Soviet bloc, with such annoying persistence, has been charging against our Bonn ally.

Early footage in the film shows bombed-out Berlin at war's end, and hungry Germans waiting to be fed. This sequence will no doubt be viewed with great sympathy by the survivors of Warsaw, Coventry, Lidice and Rotterdam, not to mention Auschwitz, especially as the commentary has nothing more to say about Germany's postwar misery except to ascribe it to the "ill-guided" policy of its then government. This is the closest the film comes to mentioning Hitler.

The picture is profuse in acknowledging thanks to its former Western enemies, and particularly the United States, for help in the creation of the present "democratic" Federal Republic. Democracy, in the conception of the film's producers seems to mean any form of government to which there is no audible opposition.

That Adenauer should loom large in a film sponsored by his administration is quite natural; but, watching it, one would never dream that "Der Alte" has any opposition; or that he became Chancellor, in the first place, by a majority of one vote, the decisive vote having been his own.

The picture fails to mention even the existence of a Social Democratic Party, which should prove pleasant news to German Social Democrats, who today command very close to half the country's voting strength and whose taxes paid for a proportionate part of the film's total cost.

"A People and Its State" is scheduled for showing on some American educational TV stations. For those who can see more than the frames show, and who can hear more than the commentator says, it will prove very educational indeed.

"The Nation", New York,
April 20th 1963

The Old, Old Alibi

World-wide indignation at the wide-scale employment of former Hitler generals and nazi civil servants at all levels of the West German state machine has inspired the Bonn authorities to dust off the old and tired alibi that the nazi crimes were all committed by the "deplorable" SS, and that the Wehrmacht and the nazi government machine in general had nothing to do with them.

Latest example of this tactic was given after GDR revelation of the fact that a majority of the State Secretaries in the Bonn Government served the nazis in responsible positions. GERMAN REPORT detailed these charges on April 5th.

On April 28th, the "Sunday Telegraph", conservative newspaper published in London, gave some details of the charges against Volkmar Hopf, today State Secretary in the West German Ministry of Defence, who sent men to concentration camps; Friedrich Vialon, today State Secretary in the Ministry for Development Aid, who helped loot the Jews of the occupied Soviet Union; and Franz Thedieck, State Secretary in the Ministry for All-German Questions, who was a top official in the nazi Military Administration in Belgium.

The West German Government, obviously very upset at these disclosures in a "respectable" British newspaper, commissioned Rainer Barzel, Minister for All-German Affairs, to write a reply, which was printed in the "Sunday Telegraph" on May 5th. Interestingly enough, Herr Barzel found nothing to say in defence of State Secretary Hopf and State Secretary Vialon, thus confirming by omission that the charges against them are true. With regard to Herr Thedieck, he pointed out that he had been dismissed from the nazi Military Administration for Belgium in 1943, apparently for religious reasons, and concluded weakly from this that he had really been an anti-nazi. Nevertheless, he had happily served as personal assistant to the head of the Military Administration for the previous three years, and had therefore shared in the nazi crimes committed in Belgium.

Herr Barzel then produced the well-worn "alibi" story: "The Military Administation in Belgium,

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(cont. from front page)

The Old, Old Alibi

from which Herr Thedieck was dismissed in April 1943, had nothing to do with the deportation of the Jews; that was the deplorable task of the secret Police and of the SS."

Even superficial acquaintance with the facts shows that this is completely untrue. The chief of the nazi Military Administation in Belgium was General Eggert Reeder, and Thedieck was his personal assistant. The standard work on the liquidation of European Jewry, Gerald Reitlinger's "The Final Solution" (London 1953) states: "At the trial of Falkenhausen and Reeder, which was not concluded until March 9th 1951, the Brussels Court ruled that both were guilty of ordering the deportation of 25,000 Jews..." According to the same source, these deportations began in December 1941, when Thedieck was still Reeder's assistant. Confirmation of Reeder's role (and it should be emphasised that he was a Wehrmacht general, and not an SS man) is to be found in Nuremberg Trial Document NG-5209, an official nazi Foreign Ministry Report dated July 9th 1952 that General Reeder had been conferring with Himmler on the specific question of deporting Jews from Belgium.

Herr Barzel's attempt to draw a distinction between the supposedly "honourable" Wehrmacht and the "disreputable" SS is thus seen to be a part of the long-term West German campaign to whitewash the Wehrmacht and the military administrations which it established in the occupied countries in Europe, and to blame the whole liquidation of the Jews on the "deplorable" SS and Gestapo.

This attempt to make a distinction where none existed was decisively refuted by the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, which stated in its summing up on September 30th 1946, at the end of the trial of major war criminals: "They (the leaders of the Wehrmacht) have been a disgrace to the honourable profession of arms... The truth is that they actively participated in these crimes, or sat silent and acquiescent, witnessing the commission of crimes more shocking than the world has ever known."

British TUs Greet GDR

Organisations representing about half a million British trade unionists and Labour Party members signed a message of greetings to the trade unions of the GDR on the occasion of May Day. The message stated:

"We send greetings to the trade unionists of the German Democratic Republic. It is our fervent hope that in the coming year we shall be able to improve relations between our two countries.

"We are convinced that recognition of both German republics and the establishment of friendly relations with both would be in the interests of the German and the British people and of world peace. As trade unionists we are deeply concerned at the mounting threat of unemployment. We believe that improvement of trade between our countries and the removal of all barriers and embargoes to free exchanges would be of immense value.

"We deplore the visa restrictions which in the past months have prevented your trade unionists, cultural workers, sportsmen and civic dignitaries from visiting our country.

"Above all we are alarmed at the threat to peace resulting from the division of the world into military alliances, and the increasing tempo of the nuclear arms race.

"We are completely opposed to any policies which would place nuclear weapons in the hands of either German republic. We support the policy of disengagement and nuclear free zones in both German republics, and indeed in wider areas of Europe as well.

"We know that the elements which supported Nazi aggression are still with us and powerful. The most effective weapon against them is friendship between the peoples and in particular between the trade unionists of all countries."

The message was signed by the national committees of four British unions, sixteen trades councils, and hundreds of union area and district committees.

STRIKE WIN IN W. GERMANY

West German metal workers won a considerable pay rise early in May after the biggest labour conflict in Germany since 1928.

About 100,000 engineers quit work in selected factories in the province of Baden-Württemberg on April 29th; the employers immediately reacted with a lock-out of all metal workers in the province, totalling about half a million, with the declared intention of bankrupting the union involved by increasing the number of union members drawing strike pay.

The strike was settled on May 7th as the result of massive government intervention, after the union had threatened to spread the strike to the Ruhr, and other unions had planned support action. Under the terms of settlement, all metal workers throughout West Germany will receive 5% pay increases immediately, and 2% more next year, instead of the 8% immediate rise they were demanding.

Trade union observers regarded the strike as extremely significant, since it had dispersed the widely-circulated West German myth that employers and workers were now "social partners", and that the class struggle had been banished from West Germany. Great importance was attached to the fact that although the strike started as a purely economic struggle, one of the main slogans of the strikers was "Away with the Emergency Laws", a body of West German pending legislation under which all strikes could be banned.

GDR Medal for Bertrand Russell

Bertrand Russell, noted British peace advocate, was amongst the recipients of the "Ossietzky Medal", awarded for the first time on May 5th by the German Peace Council of the GDR.

The medal is named after Carl von Ossietzky, German progressive, who died in 1938 as the result of bad treatment during his five years detention in a nazi concentration camp. Before his imprisonment by the nazis, Ossietzky had been editor of the left-wing weekly "Weltbühne". In 1936, while in concentration camp, Ossietzky was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize; he had rejected nazi offers to release him if he would spurn the prize.

The Ossietzky Medal was also awarded to a number of prominent peace personalities in both German states, including author Arnold Zweig, actress Helene Weigel, and West German author Karlludwig Opitz.

VISAS: Letters to 'The Times', London

Sir, – The Third International Congress of the Association of Museums of Arms and Military History will be held in London commencing on April 22. The chairman is Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer.

Your readers may not be aware that the British Government has refused entry documents to invited delegates from the German Democratic Republic.

This is not the first instance in which scientists and academics from the German Democratic Republic have been refused entry to Britain. The reason given in this case is that so long as the Government of the German Democratic Republic is not prepared to allow freedom of movement to and from the west to all its subjects, then the British Government insists that entry to the west be similarly restricted.

Scientists from the west are not refused entry to the German Democratic Republic for similar academic purposes. I am sure that British scientists will join me in deploring the policy of their Government which hinders international exchange of knowledge.

However much the British Government may dislike the policy of the German Democratic Republic, the grounds given would seem to amount to an interference with the authority of another state to regulate the movements of its citizens. This is an encroachment on the rights of that sovereign state.

Yours faithfully,
Frederick Rose,
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin,
Berlin W 8,
Unter den Linden 6,
German Democratic Republic

(April 19th 1963)

★

Sir, – May I write in support of the plea made by Professor Frederick Rose . . .

It is no doubt a legitimate and even logical argument on the part of the British Government, that so long as the German Democratic Republic is not prepared to allow freedom of movement to and from the west to all its subjects, entry here must be similarly restricted. But can we not do better than adopt a merely retaliatory policy, which so far as I am aware has produced no betterment, and which, on the contrary, has certainly proved harmful to international scientific relations?

Recognizing the tragedy and perhaps the inevitability of the Berlin Wall, and the fact that it could be with us for a long time to come, should we not endeavour to render it transparent wherever this is possible? Such is possible in the field of scientific interchange and Professor Rose properly reminds us that scientists from the west are not refused entry to the German Democratic Republic for academic purposes. We must therefore plead that those from East Germany who wish or are invited to attend scientific occasions in this country, should be permitted so to do and to accept.

A similar appeal was made by Lord Shackleton in the course of the recent debate on scientific policy (House of Lords Official Report, February 27, 1963, col. 111-2), when he urged the Minister for Science to re-examine the question, as one which has no direct relations to party politics, to international politics, or to the cold war. All this is by no means to claim that special indulgence be granted to scientists apart from other scholars or from ordinary men. It does, however, entail our responsibility to preserve international scientific relations in times of peace, as they were indeed once respected even in time of war. Many of us believe this purpose to be supremely important not only in its own right; but also as an entry to those wider problems, the solution of which would lead to the withering away of the Wall and the Curtain and all they represent.

In the particular issue of the entry of scientists from the German Democratic Republic into the United Kingdom, we therefore pray for speedy political action on the part of Her Majesty's Government.

Alexander Haddow, Director
Chester Beatty Research Institute.
Institute of Cancer Research,
Royal Cancer Hospital,
Fulham Road, S.W.3.

(April 23rd 1963)

★

Sir, – A letter from a member of the Humboldt University, Berlin, published in THE TIMES of April 19, revealed that visas to visit this country are being refused by the Foreign Office to scholars from east Germany who wish to attend meetings of learned bodies arranged to take place in Great Britain.

One factual example is the denial of visas to three east German colleagues who have been invited to the 12th International Meeting of Assyriologists in London this year from July 1 to July 4.

The reasons of national (or N.A.T.O.) concern which are alleged in support of this ban have been challenged in their political aspect by the letter aforementioned. And no other kind of justification can be found for an official policy so illiberal in character, and so harmful both to learning and to international good will.

Yours faithfully,

C. J. Gadd, Chairman of the Organizing Committee, IIIe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale.
221, Rosendale Road, S. E. 21

(April 29th 1963)

★

Sir, – The refusal of the British Government to permit the entry into Britain of East German scientists is a source of anxiety and embarrassment to those organizing international congresses. It is to be feared that the anomalies of the situation are not generally appreciated.

Scientists the world over had assumed that the problem had been solved when the Council of I.C.S.U. (International Council of Scientific Unions), on a motion presented by the United States, agreed that East Germany could become a member. The decision was accepted by Britain, and East Germany became a fully accredited member of the unions, including the International Geographical Union, which accept the authority of I.C.S.U. The International Geographical Union receives and accepts the annual membership dues of East Germany, to which, in common with all the 50 or 60 member countries, were sent notices and invitations relating to the forthcoming International Geographical Congress, which is to be held in Britain.

Through the refusal to permit East German delegates to enter the country the British organizers of the congress are now put in the embarrassing position of appearing to withdraw by unilateral national action what has already been conceded by an international body to which Britain adheres.

L. Dudley Stamp, Chairman,
T. H. Elkins, Hon. Secretary, 20th International Geographical Society, S. W. 7.

(April 30th 1963)

Interview With a Loser

By Klaus Ulrich

Every year in May the world's most difficult amateur cycle race — the Peace Race — attracts millions of fans on its 1500 mile course through Poland, Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic. Competitors from some 20 different countries usually take part. Here is an interview with one of the riders, a man who never had a chance to win but keeps coming back for more.

"Your chances are so slight. Didn't you ask yourself whether you should bother starting again this year?"

"Of course it's nice to take part in a race where you believe you might win or at least be among the leaders who are applauded and photographed for the newspapers. But things are different here, it's nice just to be in it, for the race is an unforgettable event even when you come in last. It might be compared with the Olympic Games — everyone would like to say that he once took part in them. Thousands of cycle racers dream of lasting through the Peace Race. It's like a mountain top to be conquered."

"What is so special about the race? It isn't easier than other stage races, in fact, it is more difficult."

"I can answer that in a few words: the atmosphere, the enthusiasm of hundreds of thousands of people, and the equality!"

"The equality?"

"Yes. Of course, during the racing itself, no one is equal to anyone else, but as soon as the day's goal is reached, one feels this equality again, and I assure you, someone who is usually far behind feels it much more clearly than the winner. The winner hears all the applause and shouting and is surrounded by crowds of people. But riders like myself who arrive at the stadium when many of the spectators are already leaving for home can better appreciate what it means when a young lad suddenly gets up from the grass and runs over with a warm blanket. He takes the machine, shows the way to the showers, leads me to the bus and shakes my hand warmly when he leaves. That is what's so special about the Peace Race, what makes it better than other races..."

"You mean the lad with the blanket?"

"Don't get me wrong. With amateurs, it's generally only the ones who are great successes who amount to anything with the public. That's understandable from the spectator's point of view. Unfortunately, they don't take into account the very different conditions in each race and for each participant. Only the momentary victors mean anything to them. But in the Peace Race, even when I am the very last man and come in three hours after the day's winner, the organisers see that someone is waiting for me with a blanket, and I can see that the helper is glad to be of assistance despite my lateness. I get a room which may be next to that of the man wearing the Yellow Jersey, the cyclist who's leading, and sometimes my room is even better than his. My table is set just as well as that of the leading team, and there is a flag of my country on it just like theirs. Do you see what I mean by equality?"

"Yes, I think so."

"That is why we always like to come back to the Peace Race, where everyone lives together under one roof like a big family. Hard as the race is, it is certainly the biggest and best meeting of the year."

"Have you ever won a prize in the race?"

"Yes, at the final award for all participants. I had come in 62nd and received a very nice bath towel. I knew that I would not win a radio as 62nd man, but with a towel there was some danger that I might hang it up behind the bathroom door and use it after a bath. But instead, I put it in the cupboard where I keep the few cups and prizes I have won, for it is a souvenir of the things I have mentioned."

"And presents?"

"I have taken part in three Peace Races, and received a present in each of the three countries during each race. That makes nine presents. That reminds me of another aspect of the race — the visits to the factories. All of us are interested in seeing factories in other countries, shaking hands and speaking a little with workers there, even when there are language difficulties. We always returned from such visits with little gifts, and they, too, have their place in my cupboard, even though they are really souvenirs rather than prizes. But when I have visitors, I can always talk a little about each of the souvenirs, as well as about the bath towel."

"Which of the three countries did you like the most?"

"I can't possibly answer that. I don't like ham for breakfast quite as often as we get it in Poland; I like my coffee stronger than we get it in the German Democratic Republic; and I could do with rather fewer dumplings in Czechoslovakia. But that is really all that I could criticise, except for the fact that the wind always seems to be against me in all three countries."

"What do you think of the aims of the race?"

"I believe that the organisers want to guarantee a good sportsmanlike atmosphere in the race, and also promote understanding among the different nationalities, as the rules of the race set out. That is only possible if everyone is made to feel that defeat on the road does not lower him at all in the eyes of the winners. Since this is true, I believe in the aims of the organisers, and that is why I shall try to return again next year. Since cyclists come back year after year, the race never loses any of its importance. In its twelve or thirteen laps, it not only tests who the best cyclists are, but brings all the riders together under the three-wheel symbol of the Peace Race.

Condensed from an article in "Neues Deutschland", Berlin, on May 6th 1963

"Lift Sports Ban on E. Germans"

An international sports deputation has protested against the continued ban by Britain and all other NATO countries on GDR athletes, the London "Daily Express" reported on April 30th.

"The deputation was headed by Sir Wavell Wakefield, M. P., former England Rugby captain, and the Marquis of Exeter, vice-president on the International Olympic Committee", the newspaper reported.

"They have been to see Lord Home, Britain's Foreign Secretary. One suggestion is that there should be a sort of UNO sports passport.

"Sandy Duncan, British Olympic secretary, said last night: 'We don't expect any trouble over the next Olympics because the East and West Germans enter as one team. But for European and world championships this does not apply, so it is impossible to hold a genuine and complete championship in any NATO country. We claim that sport should transcend politics'."

(For other protests against the British visa ban, see page 75)

Ruhr Merger — Triumph for Thyssens

By Allen Mann

Nine elderly men at a long table in Strasbourg, France, reached a decision on March 27th this year which, though completely predictable, made economic history in nearby West Germany and in all of Europe. The "Nine Apostles of Steel and Coal" were members of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community, and the decision they made was finally to permit the merger of the August Thyssen Huette A.G. and the Phoenix-Rheinrohr A.G., forming the largest steel concern in German history, with a capacity exceeding any producer in Britain or the Common Market.

Together, the two companies control about one quarter of all West German steel production; in 1962 they produced seven million tons of steel, nearly 10% of total European Common Market production. They also own coal mines, iron and steel merchandising organisations, and the huge Blohm & Voss Shipyards in Hamburg. They control subsidiaries in Canada, Argentina, Switzerland, Chile and other countries, they exert powerful influence in Liberia and Mauretania, where they get much of their iron ore, and this influence is spreading to their raw material sources in other parts of Africa and in Latin America. They have fine-typed but world economy shaping agreements with huge concerns like America's Bethlehem Steel and Armco Steel Co. and companies in France, Italy and the Benelux countries.

August I

The history of the Thyssen Empire, to which these two firms belong, casts an ironic light on the capacity of western governments never to learn from past mistakes — or never to want to learn from them.

In April 1871, while Prussia was still playing triumphant marches to celebrate its victory over France, August Thyssen founded his iron and steel plant. The time was favourable, for the 5,000 million franc indemnity squeezed from the defeated French poured into the coffers of the new German industrialists. Thyssen, admirably situated on the Ruhr, expanded swiftly until in 1904 his firm was the largest steel producer in Europe (with Phoenix — later to merge with Thyssen — in second place and Krupp only 5th). Thyssen was a foremost supplier of military equipment to the Kaiser's forces during World War One, and since he was clever enough to transfer most of his war profits safely to neutral Holland, he was soon the richest man in Germany. The Weimar Republic paid him with tax money for the loss of foreign ore mines and a steel plant in Lorraine, now returned to France, and this money enabled him to buy up more plants and to make his coal mines and steel plants nearly the most modern in the world.

But foreign competition was powerful, and a group of large German steel concerns decided to come together to meet the threat jointly. August Thyssen led in organising the gigantic Vereinigte Stahlwerke AG (United Steelworks, Inc.) which became a leader in world steel production; he died in April 1926, one month before the agreement on the trust was finally initialed.

His main heir, son Fritz, took over his ruling position in the Vereinigte Stahlwerke and went on to make history — very bad history.

Thyssen Finances Hitler

Fritz Thyssen wanted to build up a "Wehrstaat" in Germany — a military dictatorship. As early as October 1923 he was in contact with another man with similar ideas, Adolf Hitler; he contributed 100,000 gold marks to Hitler's unsuccessful Munich Beerhall Putch in November 1923. From that date onwards, Thyssen was the main financial supporter of the Nazi Party. His most famous method of financing was to withdraw large sums from his account in the Berlin August Thyssen Bank and place the money in cash in a special safe deposit box in the bank. One other man had a second key to the safe — Hermann Goering, and he withdrew the sums which Thyssen deposited.

Fritz Thyssen also pressured all members of Germany's coal syndicate in February 1930 to contribute seven pfennigs for every ton of coal they mined to a political fund which financed the nazi election campaigns. Fritz Thyssen officially joined the Nazi Party in 1931; in November 1932 he urged Hindenburg to appoint Hitler chancellor, and when Hitler finally seized power in January 1933 Thyssen became "the top heavy industrial expert of the Nazi Party and the Government." He called himself "highest economic authority" of Nazi Germany.

Fritz Thyssen later broke with Hitler and moved to Switzerland. The main reason was that Thyssen wanted Germany to move eastwards without attacking the west, and was willing to make certain concessions in order to achieve British neutrality. Hitler was not. When Thyssen was caught in Cannes in 1940 and delivered up to the nazis by the Pétain Government in Vichy, he was placed in comfortable and honorable confinement — similar to the confinement of Belgian King Leopold or Hjalmar Schacht. More important, his powerful block of shares in the Vereinigte Stahlwerke was never in the least infringed upon, despite constant pressure from his competitors. His dividends grew and multiplied till the end of the war.

Freed by the Americans from his confinement, he was flown to Capri to "recuperate", and then sent to a sanatorium in Frankfurt, West Germany, until he was officially exonerated of his nazi past by a de-nazification court in September 1948 (he was classed as a "camp-follower", a grouping which was not punished). His fortune then and later was administered by the late banker and steel industrialist Robert Pferdmenges, a supporter of the nazis who was one of Konrad Adenauer's closest friends and strongest backers. An interesting footnote: Pferdmenges took into his employ in managing the Thyssen interests an up-and-coming young lawyer whose Nazi Party membership and Storm Trooper candidacy had already been forgotten. The cold, ambitious young lawyer was Gerhard Schröder, today West Germany's Foreign Minister and possible future chancellor.

Potsdam No Problem

The major powers agreed at Potsdam that "the German economy shall be decentralised for the purpose of eliminating the present excessive concentration of economic power as exemplified in particular by cartels, syndicates, trusts, and other monopolistic arrangements." But the trusts were confiscated from their war criminal owners only in the eastern part of Germany, in what is now the GDR. In the West, despite laws passed in several West German provinces, but vetoed by the western powers, they were never nationalised; decentralisation was understood as dividing up the largest syndicates into smaller units, permitting the owners to swap shares so that no-one was hurt, and enabling them later to put the pieces together on a profitable basis when world anti-fascist pressure

had died down. Each large concern still had good friends in Britain or America dating from the pre-war years. These friends saw to it that no real damage was done.

The now decentralised Vereinigte Stahlwerke had been closely allied to the Dillon, Read & Co. investment bankers in New York, who had loaned them over 400,000,000 marks in 1926 and 1927. Fritz Thyssen had been especially friendly with the bank's vice-president, William H. Draper, and when Draper came to Germany as head of the Economic Division of the U.S. Military Government, all Thyssen worries were at an end. This was even more true when the USA decided to rebuild West Germany as a main bulwark in the resumed struggle against "world bolshevism".

Fritz Thyssen died in February 1951. His widow Amélie and his daughter Anita Zichy-Thyssen took over the Thyssen estate, assigning trustworthy men in West Germany to weld it together again while they spent the rapidly increasing dividends in their home in Argentina. By 1958 the two main sections of the property had already been consolidated. At this point, the Thyssen managers applied to the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Board for the required permission to merge finally these two main properties — the August Thyssen Huette AG and Phoenix-Rheinrohr AG. Though permission of this kind was usually not hard to get, all they got was a "No", for the coal and steel interests in France and the Benelux countries feared the concentration of competitive power which would emerge as strong as before the war. Indeed, West Germany's economic dominance in West Europe had already progressed too far for them.

The Thyssen interests just bided their time, while mobilising support from people as high up as Chancellor Adenauer himself. On April 29th 1960 August Thyssen Huette's director, Hans-Guenther Sohl, stated publicly: "Time will tell who will suffer the disadvantages, the High Authority or Thyssen. We are not hypnotised by fear and we know exactly what we are after. We will make proper use of our freedom of action; the Thyssen Plant will continue to move ahead."

Director Sohl was correct. In line with the new French-West German pact and the realignment in West European power politics, the High Authority finally agreed on March 27th 1963 to permit the merger. The Thyssen dynasty, which had armed the Kaiser in World War One, and built up the huge Vereinigte Stahlwerke which helped Hitler into power and then supplied him with steel for World War Two, had now been permitted for the third time in history to create a giant which was equipped and ready to supply steel of all varieties for the German industrialists' swiftly growing military machine. This time the steel was not only for tanks, warships and airplanes, but for missiles as well. The Thyssen merger was one more step towards the German militarists' aim of conquering Europe.

Parents & Teachers in E. Berlin

By Madeleine Karrer

I first met Frau Pisternik three years ago when I started working in our parents' association at the class level. A year later we both belonged to the school association — she as its veteran chairman, I as a very newly-elected member. Our acquaintanceship developed when I joined the Executive of the parents' association last year. I came to know Frau Pisternik as an extremely efficient and charming worker. She is always ready to pull more than her weight and to advise those who need her help.

Sitting in her pleasantly furnished living-room we talked about the tasks facing the association during the coming year and about Käthe Pisternik herself. Slender in build, energetic in character and well-known in our residential area, this 55-year-old mother of two teenagers leafed through the minutes of the last meeting. Her life has been both interesting and hard. Hard until 1945 and interesting from then onward.

Käthe was born in Hamburg. Her father was a window cleaner, her mother a working-class girl who went to evening school after her five children were born in order to learn how to read and write properly so that she could help them with their homework. Käthe attended elementary school and dreamed of becoming a teacher. But that was, of course, quite out of the question. Her father could barely pay the school fees as it was. And so she apprenticed herself to a farm machinery wholesale firm where she worked until it went bankrupt and her apprenticeship came to an abrupt and premature end. Her next job was with the Construction Workers' Union where she did office work and, incidentally, met her husband.

Soon after the nazis came to power he was sentenced to a long term of penal servitude as a resistance fighter. After proclaiming the sentence the judge told the wives of the defendants that they could obtain a divorce immediately — they only had to sign the already-filled-out forms. Käthe refused and went on working in an office. A different one, because the nazis had banned the trade unions by that time.

After May 1945 the Russians set her to work at the Lichtenberg Town Hall in Berlin. I was very impressed by the way they selected those first civil servants. The people were still in their cellars and the battle of Berlin in its final stages when the Russians went into the open flats to look for workers. Naturally, they could not trust the people to tell them the truth. It was quite astounding the way dyed-in-the-wool nazis tried to convince friends, neighbours and acquaintances that they actually were old-time Communists. So what did the Russians do? They examined the books on the bookshelves. When they found a household without fascist literature they were pretty sure that they had found a family which was at least basically decent.

Käthe's new job was looking after displaced, lost and refugee children; a heartbreaking, but very worthwhile task. She re-joined the Social Democratic Party and became a member of the German Socialist Unity Party when Communists and Social Democrats merged to form the new working-class party in the then Soviet Occupation Zone and in Berlin. In the late summer of 1945 her husband came home and then Käthe Pisternik broke down utterly and completely.

A few years later she was helping children with their homework. This kind of assistance was initiated by the Democratic Women's League for the children of working women, for at that time there were no extra-school facilities attached to the schools here. Soon afterwards her own little boy, Peter, started attending school and Käthe took an active part in school affairs from then onward. The starting point was the

first form schedule. A ruling decreed that children born in 1946 must have their lessons first thing in the morning so that they could have a nap after lunch. The head-master violated this provision when compiling the over-all school schedule and Käthe took up the issue with him. She pushed her demand through and the grateful parents elected her to the parents' association a short time later.

She has worked within this body ever since. Over the past ten years she sat on various commissions and has also chaired the association. She has very definite ideas about the tasks of the parents' association which, in our school, is comprised of members nominated by the associations at the form level and elected at a general parents meeting.

Ensuring co-operation between parents and teachers in the education and instruction of the children is the most important job to be carried out. This means that the parents get to know the problems facing the school and the teachers become better acquainted with the problems the parents are having to tackle at home. They can sit down together and work them out — to the benefit of the children, the home and the school.

Members of the parents' association at the class level also accompany teachers when they visit the parents of their pupils at home. That is of course vital to judging the children and their work and behaviour in general. They also meet monthly with the form master or mistress and the teacher who is responsible for the class after school hours, to discuss important problems and to find the best solution for them. Parents association members also sit in on lessons to see how children are taught and how they learn. All these activities enable them to help the teachers, advise the other parents and keep in good touch with the children. The latter is especially important in our kind of school.

Our school has been running on an experimental basis for the past five years. It is what is known here as a semi-boarding school; it is open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. The children are looked after until lessons begin, and then, after school hours, their regular afternoon teacher looks after their homework and organises afternoon activities. They receive three meals a day (breakfast, lunch and tea) and the first and second formers also have a nap after lunch.

Most of the children do not arrive at school before lessons begin at 7.45 a.m., and they go home at five o'clock. But mothers who do shift work can send their children early and know that they are in good and capable hands.

The afternoon teacher sits in on lessons like arithmetic and German regularly so that she knows what the children are being taught and the methods the teacher employs. Afternoon activities are still the weak spot in the experiment, because the children must be kept in hand but they must not have the feeling that they are being organised day in and day out.

The school parents' association decided to get up various clubs and open special playrooms where the children can do what they want to once a week. They either bring their own toys or play with those provided by the school. One afternoon is devoted to the Pioneer Organisation and one to sports. My daughter's form, for instance, always goes swimming, in winter and summer. The two remaining afternoons are reserved for the clubs, and that was where the parents' help was needed. Two or three clubs are simply not enough for more than 800 pupils. So we sent letters to all the parents asking them whether they were willing to lecture on something really interesting, or teach the children a song or do anything else they thought worthwhile.

They responded really magnificently. Fathers said that they would conduct a party of children around their factory department, mothers volunteered to run a cookery course, grandfathers told the Pioneers about the growth of the German working-class movement as they remembered it, people who had been abroad lectured and showed lantern slides. In all, over 150 parents replied that they would be happy to be of assistance. The parents' association had to set up a club committee, comprised not only of its own members, but also of teachers, supervisors and the Pioneer Leader, in order to get the clubs going on a large scale. The children enjoy this kind of work and the parents this kind of co-operation.

Another committee within the school parents' association concerns itself with education and instruction — the accent lying currently on mathematics and physics in accordance with present-day scientific developments. A third committee is concerned with polytechnical instruction — the day spent once a week in either a factory or on a farm — and on linking it with instruction in mathematics, physics and other subjects. That helps the children understand production processes better and also results in mathematics being a great deal less dry and theoretical than it used to be. Our parents' association has three other committees in addition to those already mentioned; one responsible for giving a helping hand to the Pioneers Organization in the school, one that checks on hygiene in general and the kitchen in particular and a special committee that assists in preparing the Youth Dedication ceremony. At this ceremony, the 14-year-old pupil is admitted to the adult world. In the months leading up to the ceremony there are excursions, interesting lectures and other events. At the ceremony itself speeches are usually made by well-known artists, statesmen or scientists, poems are recited and music performed by accomplished musicians. Participation is on a voluntary basis and is subject to the parents' approval.

All these committee activities are carried out in close conjunction with the school. Frau Pisternik takes part in every school staff meeting as an equal with full voting rights. That means that the parents are fully represented at these meetings and also that the school staff can pass on requests through Frau Pisternik to the parents. These staff meetings also serve to convince the teachers of the importance of the parents' association at the class level and to encourage them to co-operate with the parents' association for their own class. At first the teachers weren't always so enthusiastic and often thought that the parents would just meddle or see to it that their own children received special attention. Since that was hardly ever so and the class associations really helped them in their own work, the teachers have now become convinced that sharing responsibility for the good of the children is better than adhering to the for-each-his-own principle. This becomes especially evident at the form meetings held at regular intervals throughout the year for all parents where topical issues are discussed, measures are decided upon and where the parents' association acts as a driving force.

Co-operation and mutual confidence have not always been as good as this at our school. This beneficial development is largely due to the untiring and exemplary work done by Käthe Pisternik. In 1962, the GDR Government gave official recognition to her efforts over many years by awarding her the "Dr Theodor Neubauer Medal in Gold" on the GDR's Teacher's Day. This is the highest award for persons concerning themselves with the education and instruction of children, but not directly employed as teachers. It is second only to the title "Teacher of Merit".

The medal was a fitting reward for a woman who has worked unceasingly for ten whole years for the benefit of our school, its pupils and its parents association, and who has made a truly great success of her job.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

From a new book published in Britain, "The Press in Germany" by Albert Duesenberg, I glean the following magnificent misprint:

"According to circulation figures, nine percent (of 214 West German newspapers) are committed to a definite political curse ..."

I would have put the figure higher.

Misunderstanding

The Bonn correspondent of "The Times", London, had a field day recently with a long and pretty confused article about a visit to the GDR; it was published on April 22nd on the leader page of that august organ. (Incidentally, the article was headed "Germanies Split by Misunderstanding", thus throwing the weight of the British Establishment onto the "ies" side of the dispute as to whether it should be "Germanies" or "Germanys"; perhaps GERMAN REPORT, which has been sticking to the second spelling, should go in for some massive reconsideration).

Quite a lot of the article was confused and cloudy; I am still pondering what, if anything, the author meant when he wrote: "If the west has surrendered to practical materialism, the east has firmly turned its back on the theoretical variety".

But he made a number of interesting points. He quotes an "East German professor who has never made any secret of his hostility to communism" as saying: "Tell the people in Bonn when you go back that what they have over there is a real political pig-sty; and that if they go on behaving in this unseemly and irresponsible manner, we shall cease to regard ourselves as part of them; and there will indeed emerge two Germanies, not through anything the communists have done to bring it about."

Try it Out

But one of the points which the "Times" correspondent makes deserves a comment. He writes: "Only the presence of 20 Soviet divisions prevents the (East German) regime from being swept away in a spontaneous uprising."

For years, the Government of the GDR, with the full support of the Soviet Government, has been urging that all foreign troops should be withdrawn from the two German states, including of course the troops stationed in the GDR. Since the western powers have not taken up any of these repeated proposals, it means one of two things: either the western powers do not believe that the GDR is so shaky, or they do not wish the "East German regime" to be swept away. Pay your money and take your choice.

Herr Doktor

Some correspondence in the columns of the Paris edition of the "New York Herald Tribune" raises a question affecting the style used in GERMAN REPORT too. A reader asks the "Herald Tribune" why Konrad Adenauer, who only has honorary doctorates (although he has dozens of these) should always be referred to as Dr. Adenauer, while his probable successor Ludwig Erhard, who has a perfectly genuine doctorate which he worked for (Dr. rer. pol.) is referred to as Mr Erhard.

The paper replies: "Our general rule is to drop the "Dr" for political leaders. Usage, which is often illogical, has made Dr Adenauer an exception."

I do not often agree with the "Herald Tribune", but this seems to me to be a pretty good rule of thumb. GERMAN REPORT will in general and as long as we remember it, conform with this rule in the future.

The difficulty arises from the fact that in Germany, as in some other countries, academic titles form practically part of the name of the person concerned. In Britain, for instance, few people know, or care, whether Harold Macmillan and Harold Wilson have degrees (I had to look it up to find out myself — they both have), but neither of them would be likely to use the letters after their name in everyday life. In Germany, however, and this applies to both German states, it is positively rude not to put in the titles — all of them — and I have had a number of fierce arguments because I have not referred to Professor Dr Dr h. c. Strabismus by his full and unwieldly title, but simply as Herr Strabismus or possibly Professor Strabismus.

This habit sometimes has rather odd results. A few years ago, the Chinese premier was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Humboldt University in East Berlin, and for a few weeks at least, the press of the GDR always referred to him as Dr Chou En-lai.

Umbrage

I hope that none of our academic readers in the GDR take umbrage at our decision to cut down on the use of the little prefixes; the practice is simply confusing to readers in Britain and many other countries. I am convinced that quite a lot of our readers, at least unconsciously, think that Hans Globke should be taking pulses and popping in thermometers when we refer to him as Dr Globke.

(I should confess that I worked the slightly unusual word "umbrage" into the previous paragraph in order to recall the incident late last century during one of Britain's colonial wars, when a London newspaper headlined "Zulus Take Umbrage", and the news-boys called the news through the streets "Another town falls to the Zulus". The Concise Oxford Dictionary says: "Umbrage, n. Sense of slight or injury.")

It was not until I had completed the preceding paragraphs that I recalled an anecdote which seems to fit. The captain of a Rhine passenger steamer, with a sudden case of sickness on his hands, appealed over the ship's loudspeaker for any doctor on board to report to the purser's office on the starboard side. The ship capsized.

Tail End

My favourite story this year has already appeared in a number of papers, ranging from the Canadian "Metal Polisher, Buffer and Plater" to the London "Daily Worker", but it bears reprinting:

A matronly lady, in a hearing before a US Senate Committee, commented: "You call me a Communist because I once lived in Russia. I'm not. I once lived in Germany, too, but that didn't make me a nazi. I've even lived in the Virgin Islands."

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